reading guide

100 great reads for ages 0–18

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Children's Books Ireland is the national charity and arts organisation that champions every child's right to develop a love of reading. Through our many activities and events we aim to engage young people with books, foster a greater understanding of the importance of books for young people and act as a core resource for those with an interest in books for children in Ireland. Our mission is to inspire a love of reading in children and young people in Ireland, to share our expertise and enthusiasm with the adults who guide and influence them, to champion every child's right to excellent books and live literature events and support the artists who make that goal possible across the island of Ireland.

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Denotes an Irish author/illustrator/publisher/
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SOPHIE BEER
LOVE MAKES A FAMILY
LITTLE TIGER PRESS 2021 (BOARD) 24PP £6.99 ISBN 9781838910679

This delightful boardbook demonstrates that families are made from love and that love is found in ordinary things – bath time, bedtime stories, birthday cakes and picnics. Parents and guardians are the real heroes of this colourful story, as they fix what is broken, find what is lost and make everything better. The simple story celebrates families of various ethnicities, same-sex parents, grandparents and single parents, and the bright, bold and beautiful illustrations are bound to attract the attention of little readers. (Age 0–2)

CHRISTIANE ENGEL
BABY'S FIRST WORDS
BAREFOOT BOOKS 2019 (BOARD) 20PP £5.99 ISBN 9781782858720

Baby's First Words is packed with a wide range of vocabulary for little ones. The illustrations are beautiful, full of interesting details and visual textures, perfect for curious, attentive little eyes. Another great merit of *Baby's First Words* is the depiction of baby's parents as a same-sex interracial couple, reflecting the diverse world we live in. (Non-fiction, Age 0–4)

PETER BROWN
FRED GETS DRESSED
TEMPLAR PUBLISHING 2021 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781787419506

Fred loves to romp around his house *au naturel* until one day he finds his parents' closet door open, ventures inside and decides to have a try for himself: Dad's clothes don't fit him properly but Mum's clothes actually fit him very well. Next he dabbles in the jewellery and make-up drawer and that's when his parents arrive – and join in the fun! The tone throughout the story and illustrations is light-hearted and cosy, opening up a safe space for parents and children to talk about non-traditional gender roles and self-expression. (Age 0–4, 5–7)

JESSICA SPANYOL
CLIVE AND HIS BABIES
CHILD'S PLAY 2016 (BOARDBOOK) 14PP £5.99 ISBN 9781846438820

This series introduces readers to Clive, who loves to share his many collections of 'things,' from his hats to his bags and his dolls, with his many friends. In this book we meet Clive's dolls (his babies). Clive nurtures and feeds them; potty trains them; plays and has fun with them, and with his friends and their babies too! In this very gentle exploration of stereotypical gender roles, we see Clive and his friends naturally imitating the caring and nurturing behaviour they see their parents and guardians offering. (Age 1–3)

JESSICA SPANYOL

ROSA LOVES CARS

CHILD'S PLAY 2018 (BOARDBOOK) 14PP £5.99 ISBN 9781786281258

This series introduces very young readers to Rosa – she loves to kicks balls, ride her scooter and play with her dinosaurs. But perhaps most of all, Rosa loves all kinds of vehicles, from trucks to diggers to campervans. Rosa loves playing with her collection of cars and trucks and sharing them with her friends, and they even make their own car out of a cardboard box! A colourful boardbook with simple, clear text, perfect for young children. (Age 1–3)

HEATHER DEAN BREWER illustrated by LEUYEN PHAM

LOVE IS POWERFUL

WALKER BOOKS 2020 (HBK) 32PP £12.99 ISBN 9781406397437

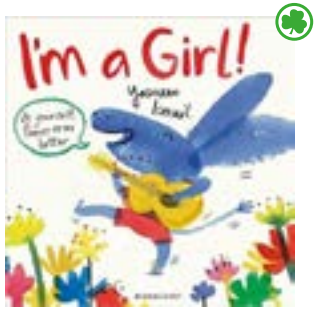
When Mari and her mother draw some words on cardboard, she wonders how this sign can be a message that the whole world will see. Sitting on her mother's shoulders, Mari is overwhelmed by the crowd but understands how everyone there is united, so she chants her own message only for it to be amplified and echoed by those around her. An uplifting book, with diverse and heartwarming illustrations, on the universal power of peaceful protest, inspired by the Women's March in NYC in 2017. (Age 2–4)

GILLIAN HIBBS

COVERED IN ADVENTURES

CHILD'S PLAY 2021 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781786283474

Sasha's dads want her to get a new jumper as her old one is covered in stains. But where the grown-ups see mess, Sasha sees all the fun she's had with her friends and family. The adventures Sasha shares with her friends are not bound by gender or ability – from building pirate ships and volcanoes, to playing football and camping, this is a glorious celebration of childhood. The illustrations are bright and joyful, and celebrate diversity in both family and friendship. (Age 2–4)

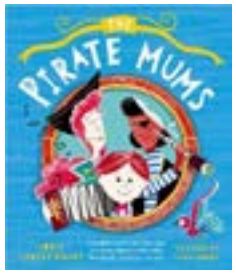


YASMEEN ISMAIL

I'M A GIRL!

BLOOMSBURY CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2015 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781408857007

I'm a Girl! is the story of a fast, loud, messy, strong and spontaneous girl who is constantly mistaken for a boy because of how she behaves and how she dresses. She's supposed to be sugar and spice, but she doesn't want to be quiet and nice all the time: she wants to win races, learn all about boats and play loud music. *I'm a Girl!* celebrates girls who do their own thing and don't feel pigeon-holed by gender stereotypes. (Age 2–4)

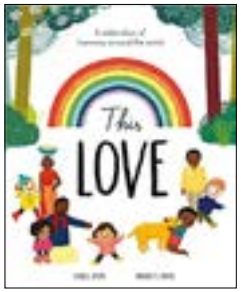


JODIE LANCET-GRANT illustrated by LYDIA CORRY

THE PIRATE MUMS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS 2021 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9780192777799

Billy's parents are not like everyone else's. His mums are always singing sea shanties, have a pet parrot and use smelly old maps instead of a sat-nav. It's SO embarrassing. Billy wishes his family was 'normal'. But then, a swashbuckling adventure changes everything ... This is an entertaining story about appreciating the value of being unique. The quirky illustrations match the energetic story and have lots of fun details for readers to enjoy. A lively story that is perfect for reading aloud. (Age 2–4)

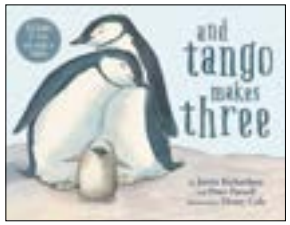


ISABEL OTTER illustrated by HARRIET LYNAS

THIS LOVE

CATERPILLAR BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781848578548

What is love to you? *This Love* is a collection of different 'moments' when different people feel love. The moments, captured in rhyme, are heartwarming and the sentiment, that love is what they all have in common, is an important idea. These words and accompanying illustrations work seamlessly together to create layers to show what difference means. It touches on differences like place, race, faith, family and age. The illustrations are warm and beautiful, making this a wonderful celebration of diversity. (Age 2–4)



JUSTIN RICHARDSON and PETER PARNELL illustrated by HENRY COLE

AND TANGO MAKES THREE

SIMON & SCHUSTER 2007 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781847381484

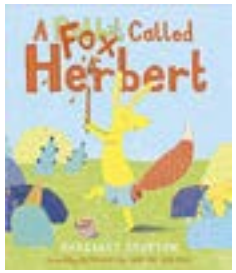
Based on real events at the penguin house at the Central Park Zoo, this is the story of two penguins named Roy and Silo who were a little bit different from the others. But their desire for a family was the same. And with the help of a kindly zookeeper, Roy and Silo got the chance to welcome a baby penguin of their very own. A simple story of love and acceptance. (Age 2–4)

STEPHANIE STANSBIE illustrated by KATY HALFORD

MY FRIENDS AND ME: A CELEBRATION OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF FAMILIES

LITTLE TIGER PRESS 2020 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781788817318

Some of Jamie's friends have two moms while some have two dads. Some of them have beds in two different houses while others live on a boat. While all these families might look different, there's some things they all have in common – they are filled with love (and the adults are bad at dancing!). With fun details on every page to amuse readers, this book is sure to entertain while celebrating family love in all its forms. (Age 2–4)

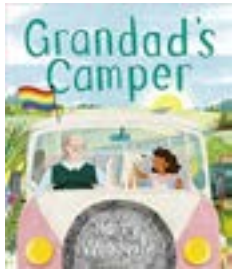


MARGARET STURTON

A FOX CALLED HERBERT

ANDERSEN PRESS 2021 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781783449330

Born a rabbit, bright young Herbert is determined to become a fox, but through his efforts meets the ire of his mother who just wants him to 'be a good rabbit'. An impossible ask for Herbert who, throughout this charming picturebook, transforms himself into a red-dotted, pointy-eared, bushy-tailed fox. With bright, expressive illustrations, this is a positive, heartwarming story about the struggles of becoming who you've always wanted to be and eventually finding acceptance, expertly crafted for young children. (Age 2–4)

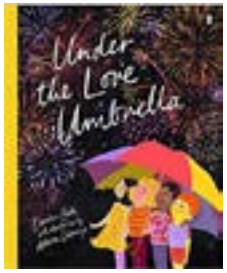


HARRY WOODGATE

GRANDAD'S CAMPER

ANDERSEN PRESS 2022 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781783449927

This beautiful picturebook navigates the grief associated with the loss of a grandparent through a celebration of their life, stories and adventures. Filled with love, *Grandad's Camper* explores elements of the LGBTQ+ experience and family through vibrant, colourful illustrations. Truly, the core of *Grandad's Camper* is a message about how the people we love always stay with us on the journey we call life. Stories like this allow us to cherish their legacy. (Age 2–4)



DAVINA BELL illustrated by ALLISON COLPOYS

UNDER THE LOVE UMBRELLA

SCRIBBLE UK 2018 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781925228977

From this award-winning creative duo comes a book about the wonder of ever-present love. Written in rhyming couplets, this is a stunning celebration of the joy and inclusivity of love as a force that's always with us, whoever we are and wherever we go in the big, wild world. Bright, expressive and featuring joyfully diverse illustrations throughout. A gorgeous book for families to share. (Age 2–4, 5–8)

PATRICIA HEGARTY illustrated by RYAN WHEATCROFT

WE ARE FAMILY

CATERPILLAR BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 24PP £7.99 ISBN 9781848576438

All families are different – and yet in many ways the same! This book uses a gentle rhyming text to follow eight different families, celebrating their everyday differences as well as the similarities they share. Through illness and health, in celebration and disappointment, families stick together. Even though every family is different, the love is all the same. (Age 2–4, 5–8)

MARY MURPHY

ONLY A TREE KNOWS HOW TO BE A TREE

OTTER-BARRY BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781913074524

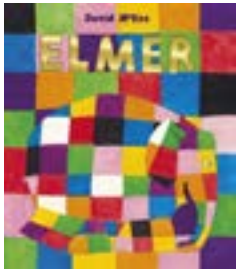
This picturebook is an exploration of the world and our place in it and how everyone and everything a child can imagine belongs and is valued, both as itself and as a part of various communities, societies and systems. This is a celebration of uniqueness and of commonality, of individuals and animals belonging together in a world that holds endless potential for wonder and kindness. This is the kind of picturebook that will lead to important conversations about identity, what it means to belong and our capacity for empathy and imagination. (Age 2–4, 5–8)

MEL ELLIOTT

THE GIRL WITH TWO DADS

EGMONT PUBLISHING 2019 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781405292436

Matilda is a new girl at Pearl's school, but there's something really cool about her family – she has TWO dads! Pearl is sure that Matilda's family must be very different to her own but, as they become friends, she starts to discover that maybe Matilda's family isn't so different after all. A funny, heartwarming tale, showing how much all kinds of families have in common. (Age 3–5)

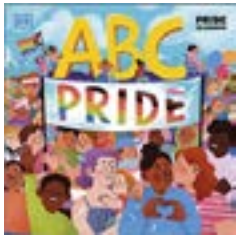


DAVID McKEE

ELMER

ANDERSEN PRESS 2007 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781842707319

Elmer is different. Elmer is patchwork. He begins to think that the grey elephants are mocking him when they laugh at him, and he soon starts to wonder what it would be like to be just the same as them. When he disguises himself to 'fit-in', he finds that the herd have lost their sense of joy and realises that they were laughing with him. Little readers will love this enduring story full of colour, wisdom and pathos. First published in 1989, *Elmer* has become an icon of happiness and celebrating difference. A modern classic. (Age 3–5)

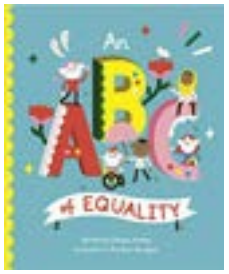


LOUISE STOWELL and ELLY BARNS illustrated by AMY PHELPS

ABC PRIDE

DK CHILDREN'S 2022 (HBK) 32PP £9.99 ISBN 9780241572542

Inclusive at every turn, this word book does a great job of introducing the ideals and the terminology that we associate with Pride and, more impressively, does a really deft job of ensuring the normality and day-to-day-ness of this inclusivity. Each highlighted word is given with context and illustrated with vibrant illustrations that do their fair share of explaining. Our ABCs are 'acceptance', 'belonging' and 'celebrate', but we also take in pronouns, gender and identity. A brilliant starter book to open-up conversations. Highly recommended. (Non-fiction, Age 3–5)

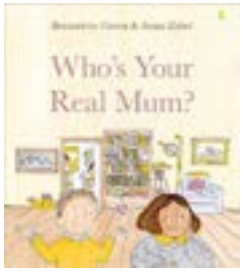


CHANA EWING illustrated by PAULINA MORGAN

AN ABC OF EQUALITY

FRANCES LINCOLN 2020 (PBK) 56PP £6.99 ISBN 9780711262133

'A is for Ability', 'B is for Belief', 'C is for Class'. All people have the right to be treated fairly, no matter who they are, what they look like or where they come from. *An ABC of Equality* introduces complicated concepts surrounding social justice using simple, clear language, accessible to the youngest of children. Bright, uncluttered illustrations convey a lot of the message and show a wonderfully diverse cast of characters. A great conversation starter with very young readers! (Non-fiction, Age 3–7)



BERNADETTE GREEN & ANNA ZOBEL

WHO'S YOUR REAL MUM?

SCRIBBLE UK 2020 (PBK) 32PP £6.99 ISBN 9781913348137

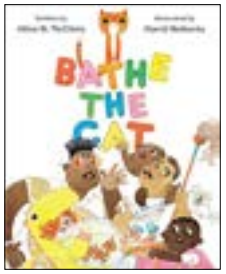
Elvi, who is of mixed race, has two mothers, one of whom has brown skin. Her friend Nicholas asks her which woman is her real mother? She patiently explains that both are. Children of same-sex parents will identify with Elvi's attempts to answer questions about her parents, while children of traditional family units will see that not all families look like theirs. This funny and touching book explores how all families are different yet very similar when it comes to the important things. (Age 3–7)

BOB JOHNSTON illustrated by MICHAEL EMBERLEY

OUR BIG DAY

THE O'BRIEN PRESS 2022 (HBK) 32PP €12.99 ISBN 9781788493147

Uncle David and his partner Simon have lived together with their fluffy dog, Bear, for a long time. They are due to get married. The narrator, David's young niece, explains that, in Ireland, everyone is now allowed to marry the person they love the most. This is since the Irish public voted that men can marry men and women can marry women. There is lots to do, and Uncle David's niece helps Uncle David and Simon prepare for their wedding. This is a celebration of love, of family and of a commitment to marriage equality. (Age 3–7)

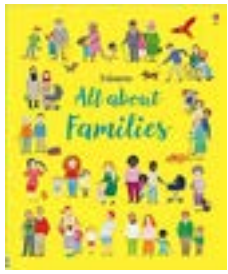


ALICE B. McGINTY illustrated by DAVID ROBERTS

BATHE THE CAT

CHRONICLE BOOKS 2021 (HBK) 48PP £12.99 ISBN 9781452142708

An utterly charming romping riot of a book. All busy families will recognise the chaos of family life at chore-time here. The family cat ensures that the 'to-do list' is continually scrambled, giving the creative team behind this book licence to run wild with stylish illustrations and clever rhyming word-play that gets funnier the more frantic the two stressed-out dads become. Designed for bedtime and reading aloud, the outrageous chaos is eventually wrangled into loving calm, and your young readers will merrily drift into sleep, worn out from all the laughing. (Age 4–7)

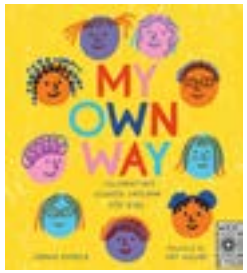


FELICITY BROOKS illustrated by MAR FERRERO

ALL ABOUT FAMILIES

USBORNE PUBLISHING 2018 (HBK) 32PP £9.99 ISBN 9781474949071

An engaging book highlighting the many variations of family, *All About Families* is an informative resource to encourage awareness, understanding and connection. Blended families, same-sex parents, single-parent families, foster parents, adoptive families and much more all feature. Brooks writes in a clear, simple style, exploring questions such as 'What is a family for?' 'How can a family change?' and topics like languages, foods and celebrations. Mar Ferrero's bright, busy illustrations are full of activity and are a true celebration of family diversity. Ideal for every school library. (Non-fiction, Age 4–8)

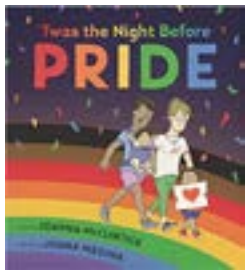


JOANA ESTRELA adapted by JAY HULME

MY OWN WAY: CELEBRATING GENDER FREEDOM FOR KIDS

WIDE EYED EDITIONS 2022 (HBK) 48PP £10.99 ISBN 9780711265844

This books helps introduce the idea of gender freedom, aiming to show that the perceived stereotype of the world being only coloured pink or blue isn't true. The sparse poetic rhyming statements and bold illustrations cover quite a lot here, but the book would be best shared in a space where discussion is encouraged. It opens up the juxtaposition of how we present ourselves to the outside world and how we may feel inside, with the core message of understanding that when it comes to who we are, it's what's in our hearts that matters most. (Age 4–8)



JOANNA McCLINTICK illustrated by JUANA MEDINA

'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE PRIDE

WALKER BOOKS 2022 (HBK) 32PP £12.99 ISBN 9781529506372

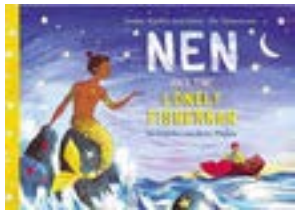
While the rhyming in this picturebook can feel a little forced at times, perhaps hamstrung by being modelled on the classic verse, it does however do a good job of showing the excitement of a young family preparing for the next day's Pride parade. A book of two halves, the first is a happy family vignette followed by a well explained history of Pride, from resistance and riots to the family friendly marches we know today. The two combine to clearly illustrate the importance of why we still march. (Age 4–8)

KATE DePALMA illustrated by NELLEKE VERHOEFF

THE BREAD PET: A SOURDOUGH STORY

BAREFOOT BOOKS 2020 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781646860654

Cora has been gifted some sourdough starter and instructions to keep it growing. The 'bread pet' quickly becomes a very active part of her inclusive home. As her kitchen becomes overwhelmed with starter and surplus loaves, her mum and mama step in to help Cora feed their multi-ethnic community. The rich diversity of Cora's community is affectionately captured with textural illustrations, and Cora's signature cobalt-blue hearing aids, yellow hair clips and light blue glasses add colour and vibrance to each page's gentle and warm palette. (Age 5–8)



IAN EAGLETON and JAMES MAYHEW

NEN AND THE LONELY FISHERMAN

OWLET PRESS 2021 (PBK) 32PP £7.99 ISBN 9781913339098

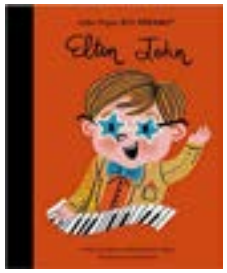
This is the story of the romance between a lonely fisherman named Ernest and a merman named Nen. Nen sings a sad song out across the ocean which is finally heard by Ernest. However Nen's father, Pelagios, does not want his son venturing to the surface world and sends a storm to separate them. This is a beautiful tale that is matched by gorgeous illustrations by James Mayhew. The romance is age appropriate and poignant and the book is great for LGBTQ+ representation. (Age 5–8)

JESSICA LOVE

JULIAN IS A MERMAID

WALKER BOOKS 2019 (PBK) 40PP £7.99 ISBN 9781406386424

Julian and Nana spot some beautiful mermaids on their way home from the pool, which inspires the little boy to play dress-up. But what will Nana think? This incredibly beautiful picturebook, with minimal text and gorgeous illustrations, explores what it means to be yourself and to be loved unconditionally. A story overflowing with charm, tenderness and humour. (Age 5–8)

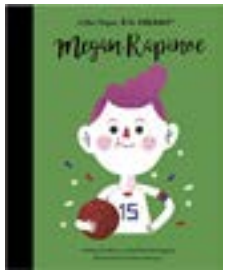


MARIA ISABEL SÁNCHEZ VEGARA illustrated by SOPHIE BEER

LITTLE PEOPLE, BIG DREAMS: ELTON JOHN

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2020 (HBK) 32PP £9.99 ISBN 9780711258389

Vibrantly and lavishly illustrated, this book shows young Reggie's journey into stardom, from his humble beginnings and finding comfort in music, changing his name, dealing with suffering despite his success, being knighted by the queen, his marriage to David and the adoption of their two sons. It shows us that despite life's challenges, his music brings millions of people together. Other titles to note in this series include David Bowie, Prince and Dolly Parton. (Non-fiction, Age 5–8)

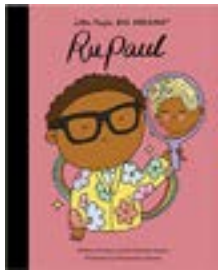


MARIA ISABEL SÁNCHEZ VEGARA illustrated by PAULINA MORGAN

LITTLE PEOPLE, BIG DREAMS: MEGAN RAPINOE

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2021 (HBK) 32PP £9.99 ISBN 9780711257818

Little Megan realised at a young age that she had a gift when it came to soccer. While she did not always feel that she fitted in at school, she knew she belonged on a the soccer pitch. In fact she was a star – her skill and talent led her, as captain, to becoming an Olympic gold medallist, a two-time Women's World Cup champion and a Golden Boot winner! An advocate for women's sports and gender equality, she is also an outspoken LGBTQ+ advocate. A biography of Billie Jean King is also available as part of this series. (Non-fiction, Age 5–8)



MARIA ISABEL SÁNCHEZ VEGARA
illustrated by WEDNESDAY HOLMES

LITTLE PEOPLE, BIG DREAMS: RUPAUL

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2021 (HBK) 32PP £9.99 ISBN 9780711246805

This book is as vibrant, colourful and wise as the subject himself. For young readers, not yet old enough to watch *Drag Race*, this book does a brilliant job of capturing a snapshot of Ru's life. In early childhood Ru didn't fit in. Playing dress-up was his favourite game. Eventually, after dropping out of school, he ends up in New York, getting married and becoming famous. Little Ru grew up to be the most influential and iconic drag queen of all time, bringing drag performance into mainstream culture. (Non-fiction, Age 5–8)

MARIA ISABEL SÁNCHEZ VEGARA illustrated by ASHLING LINDSAY

LITTLE PEOPLE, BIG DREAMS: ALAN TURING

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2020 (HBK) 32PP £9.99 ISBN 9780711246775

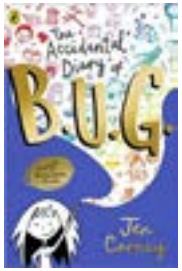
Open this book and discover – bit by bit – the biography of the founding father of modern computer science. Inspiring and educational, this book is a great resource for use in the classroom, as it touches on many aspects of the curriculum: threads of STEM, history and LGBTQ+ education are all seamlessly woven into the narrative. The book does well to distil Turing's multifarious life into such a short and breathable word count, and in doing so it reinforces one clear message: dream big, little ones! (Non-fiction, Age 5–8)

RACHEL GREENER illustrated by CLARE OWEN

MAKING A BABY: AN INCLUSIVE GUIDE TO HOW EVERY FAMILY BEGINS

NOSY CROW 2021 (HBK) 32PP £11.99 ISBN 9781788008013

This book is a perfect starting point to explain how new life can begin, including IUI, IVF, adoption and surrogacy. Using questions ('What is a person's sex?') and conversational, inclusive language ('Isn't it amazing to be able to see a baby growing inside a person's womb!') as well as a glossary, this is an honest, clear introduction to baby-making and birth. Owen's illustrations are emotive and stylish, depicting same-sex families, single parents and a diversity of ethnicities, religions and abilities. (Non-fiction, Age 6–8)



JEN CAREY

THE ACCIDENTAL DIARY OF B.U.G.

PUFFIN 2021 (PBK) 272PP £6.99 ISBN 9780241455448

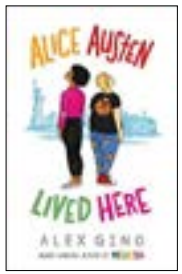
Enter the world of Billie Upton Green, or B.U.G as she hates to be known. Reading through her diary gives the reader a Billie-eyed view on life – and it's every bit as hilarious, eye-rolling, sassy and forthright as you'd expect from an opinionated ten-year-old! Adoption and same-sex parents are normal parts of her everyday life, as is Billie's weariness at having to forever explain her family. Other major pluses include: its illustrated diary style, making it accessible for more reluctant readers; it's the start of a series; and there are Biscuit Laws! (Age 7–11)

EMMA DONOGHUE illustrated by CAROLINE HADILAKSONO

THE LOTTERYS PLUS ONE

MACMILLAN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 320PP £7.99 ISBN 9781509803200

Nine-year-old Sumac lives with her two mothers, two fathers and six siblings – all named after trees, just like her – in a huge house called Camelottery, so called because of the lottery win that paid for it. Life in the mansion is chaotic yet predictable – until the Lotterys' ailing grandfather Iain arrives. The story itself could not be more relevant to the turbulent times the world finds itself in, exploring the true meaning of belonging, home, tolerance and acceptance. Offbeat, funny, wise and deliciously different, Donoghue's first book for children is an essential read. (Age 8–10, 10–12)

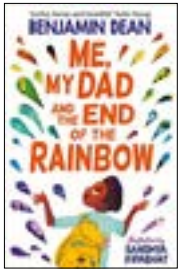


ALEX GINO

ALICE AUSTEN LIVED HERE

SCHOLASTIC 2022 (PBK) 176PP £6.99 ISBN 9781338733891

In New York, we meet maths enthusiast Sam and their fashion-and-style expert best friend TJ. They take on a school history challenge to find a new statue that represents the present Staten Island community. This is a truly inspirational trip for both non-binary pre-teens as they explore history. These two likeable characters are very comfortable in who they are, but as history teaches them, it wasn't always so. Through a wonderful network of family, friends and older residents, they discover that the school challenge also brings with it all the trials and wondrousness of being a young person. (Age 8–10, 10–12)



BENJAMIN DEAN illustrated by SANDHYA PRABHAT

ME, MY DAD AND THE END OF THE RAINBOW

SIMON & SCHUSTER 2021 (PBK) 352PP £7.99 ISBN 9781471199738

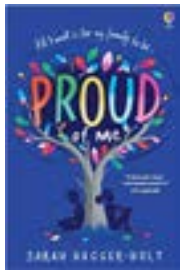
Archie's parents are acting strange and he's sure it's about a secret they're keeping from him. Along with his best friends, Seb and Bell, Archie attempts to fix his family, even if it means a journey to London Pride and some broken rules along the way. Archie is a compelling character who draws you right in, and his relationships with others are described superbly. This joyful book is a celebration of family and friendship, and is full of humour and heart. (Age 9–11)

HOLLY GOLDBERG SLOAN & MEG WOLITZER

TO NIGHT OWL FROM DOGFISH

EGMONT PUBLISHING 2019 (PBK) 304PP £6.99 ISBN 9781405294836

When bookish Avery and adventurous Bett's dads fall in love, the girls are not happy about the prospect of being sisters and hatch a plan to break them up. This reverse *Parent Trap* is wonderfully told via the medium of emails and letters between all the characters in this story. Avery (now Night Owl) and Bett (Dogfish), sent away to camp, bond against their will and, against the odds, become the unlikeliest of friends. A heartwarming tale about all types of families and relationships. (Age 9–11)

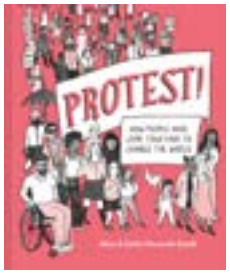


SARAH HAGGER-HOLT

PROUD OF ME

USBORNE PUBLISHING 2021 (PBK) 272PP £6.99 ISBN 9781474966245

Not-quite-twins Josh and Becky have a family that can be complicated to explain. Not only that, they are both going through very different issues, including questions about where they are from and who they are. *Proud of Me* is a warm, humane story about how even today, despite increasing acceptance in society, LGBTQ+ families can still face prejudice and misunderstandings. Not afraid to look at complicated issues but ultimately hopeful, Sarah Hagger-Holt has written a book to be proud of. (Age 9–11)



ALICE & EMILY HAWORTH-BOOTH

PROTEST! HOW PEOPLE HAVE COME TOGETHER TO CHANGE THE WORLD THROUGHOUT HISTORY

PAVILION CHILDREN'S 2021 (HBK) 168PP £14.99 ISBN 9781843654582

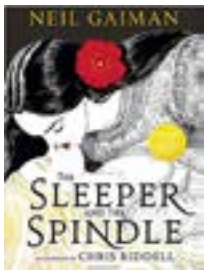
The history of peaceful protest – from the early strikes by Egyptian pyramid workers for food all the way up to Greta Thunberg and the Extinction Rebellion – is outlined in this brightly illustrated and fascinating book. *Protest!* explores the myriad ways that groups have protested creatively, including singing protests, guerrilla gardening and strikes. Packed with quirky cartoons, each chapter shows how a community came together to protest for better lives and equal rights. Young activists can even read advice on how to organise their own protest. (Non-fiction, Age 9–12)

TIM FEDERLE

BETTER NATE THAN EVER

WALKER BOOKS 2015 (PBK) 288PP £6.99 ISBN 9781406361537

Nate is a talented singer and an outcast in his small town in Pennsylvania where he is routinely bullied for being gay. He does, however, have big dreams: to escape to New York and take part in an open audition for *ET: The Musical*. Nate is an endearing and determined character, and Federle creates a voice that is both witty and naïve. Touching on themes of courage, forgiveness and self-acceptance, this is sure to appeal to any reader with an interest in musical theatre or Broadway. (Age 9–11, 12–14)



NEIL GAIMAN illustrated by CHRIS RIDDELL

THE SLEEPER AND THE SPINDLE

BLOOMSBURY CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2019 (PBK) 72PP £8.99 ISBN 9781408859650

On the eve of her wedding, a young queen sets out to rescue a princess from an enchantment. She casts aside her fine wedding clothes, takes her chain mail and her sword and follows her brave dwarf retainers into the tunnels under the mountain towards the sleeping kingdom. This queen will decide her own future – and the princess who needs rescuing is not quite what she seems. Twisting together the familiar and the new, this captivating and darkly funny fairy tale shows its creators at the peak of their talents. (Age 9–11, 12–14)

MEG GREHAN

THE DEEPEST BREATH

LITTLE ISLAND BOOKS 2019 (PBK) 180PP €9.00 ISBN 9781912417186

Stevie is eleven and loves reading and sea creatures. There's a girl at school that she likes. Actually, she's a bit confused about how much she likes her. It makes her fizz inside. That's a new feeling, one she doesn't understand. Stevie needs to find out if girls can like girls – love them, even – but it's hard to get any information. Maybe she can find an answer in a book. With the help of a librarian, Stevie finds stories of girls loving girls and builds up her courage to share the truth with her mum. Winner of the Judges' Special Award at the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2020. (Age 9–11, 12–14)

ROBIN STEVENS

DEATH IN THE SPOTLIGHT: A MURDER MOST UNLADYLIKE MYSTERY

PUFFIN 2018 (PBK) 416PP £7.99 ISBN 9780141373829

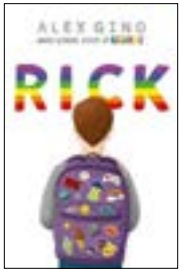
Fresh from their adventure in Hong Kong, Hazel Wong and Daisy Wells are off to the Rue Theatre in London to face an entirely new challenge: acting. But the Detective Society is never far away from danger, and it's clear there's trouble afoot at the Rue. The seventh instalment in the endlessly intriguing Murder Most Unladylike series sees Daisy develop her first crush – on the mysterious Martita. (Age 9–11, 12–14)

NOELLE STEVENSON, GRACE ELLIS, SHANNON WATTERS illustrated by BROOKE A. ALLEN

LUMBERJANES VOL. 1: BEWARE THE KITTEN HOLY

BOOM! BOX 2015 (PBK) 128PP £10.99 ISBN 9781608866878

The Lumberjanes graphic novel series is about female friendship and set in a summer camp. However, undermining this so-far-so-ordinary description, it features shape-shifters, gods, mysteries and yetis. That any expletives take the form of a woman's name, be she activist, scientist or musician, emphasises how female centred the series is. Jo, April, Mal, Molly and Ripley come from a wide range of backgrounds and the series features same-sex parents and lesbian and transgender characters. (Age 9–11, 12–14)



ALEX GINO

RICK

SCHOLASTIC 2020 (PBK) 240PP £6.99 ISBN 9780702301827

As Rick tries to fit in at his new middle school, he realises that his best friend, Jeff, is a bully. He's also not getting crushes like his classmates. Through his new friends at the Rainbow Spectrum club (and some insights from not-so-boring-after-all Grandpa Ray), Rick finds the courage to ask the big questions – who am I, and what kind of person do I want to be? An informative and warm look at identity and belonging, with some familiar faces from Gino's popular début, *George* (now published under the title *Melissa*). (Age 10–12, 12–14)

SARAH HAGGER-HOLT

NOTHING EVER HAPPENS HERE

USBORNE PUBLISHING 2020 (PBK) 272PP £6.99 ISBN 9781474966238

Izzy has just managed to find her feet, and her friendship with Grace means the world. She thinks she's ready for her next year of secondary school – until her father reveals that he's transgender and, all of a sudden, Izzy's family is the centre of attention. The book sensitively follows the family on their journey to a new normal as they find both intolerance and support in unexpected places. This is a beautiful story about love, family and the right to be who you are. (Age 10–12, 12–14)

RIYADH KHALAF illustrated by MELISSA McFEETERS

YAY! YOU'RE GAY! NOW WHAT? A GAY BOY'S GUIDE TO LIFE

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2019 (PBK) 224PP £8.99 ISBN 9781786031914

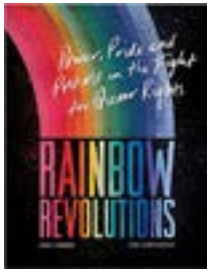
In this personal, heartfelt go-to guide for young gay men, YouTuber and presenter Riyadh Khalaf shares frank advice about everything from coming out to relationships, as well as interviews with inspirational role models and encouragement for times when you're feeling low. There's a support section for family and friends written by Riyadh's parents and lots of hilarious, embarrassing, inspiring and moving stories from gay boys around the world. (Non-fiction, Age 11–16)

ADIBA JAIGIRDAR

HANI AND ISHU'S GUIDE TO FAKE DATING

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 352PP £7.99 ISBN 9781444962246

Hani and Ishu are nothing alike. They hate it when people expect them to be the same because they are both Bengali. Hani loves socialising; Ishu never stops studying. When Hani comes out to her friends they question her bisexuality. Ishu is desperate to be Head Girl, but she isn't well-liked at school. Unexpectedly, a fake relationship is the solution to both problems. But what happens when you start to fancy your fake girlfriend? Are they actually too different to make a real relationship work? (Age 12–14)



JAMIE LAWSON illustrated by EVE LLOYD NIGHT

RAINBOW REVOLUTIONS: POWER, PRIDE AND PROTEST IN THE FIGHT FOR QUEER RIGHTS

WREN & ROOK 2019 (HBK) 96PP £12.99 ISBN 9781526361257

When the police stormed the Stonewall Inn bar in New York City, the events that followed ignited the LGBTQ+ rights movement. Lawson depicts the variety of ways queer activists have spoken up and spoken out, with a dynamic account of poet Audre Lorde alongside the outrageous fun of Pride parades. Despite outlining the hardships faced by the LGBTQ+ community, hope remains. From the supportive surrogate families of the Ballroom community to the queer culture we now know as Pride, this account is insightful and inspiring. (Non-fiction, Age 12–14)

KELLY McCAUGHRAIN

FLYING TIPS FOR FLIGHTLESS BIRDS

WALKER BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 384PP £7.99 ISBN 9781406375657

From the high wire of the Big Top to the high wire of teenage sexuality, this warm and funny story of adolescence is a delight to read. It explores family, friendship and first love with an authenticity that is both engaging and emotionally satisfying. Through the eyes of the two main characters – one through very clever use of a blog – we learn the pros and cons of being different and of managing life in the margins. Winner of three CBI Book of the Year Awards, including the overall Book of the Year and the Children's Choice Award. (Age 12–14)

ALICE OSEMAN

HEARTSTOPPER: VOLUME 1

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2019 (PBK) 288PP £10.99 ISBN 9781444951387

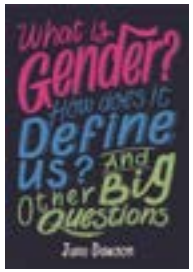
This graphic novel is the first in the Heartstopper series. It is about love, friendship, loyalty and mental illness. Charlie and Nick are at the same school, but they've never met ... until one day when they're made to sit together. They quickly become friends, and soon Charlie is falling hard for Nick, even though he doesn't think he has a chance. But love works in surprising ways, and Nick is more interested in Charlie than either of them realised. This book encompasses all the small stories of Nick and Charlie's lives that together make up something larger, which speaks to all of us. Now a major Netflix series. (Age 12–14)

REBECCA STEAD

THE LIST OF THINGS THAT WILL NOT CHANGE

ANDERSEN PRESS 2021 (PBK) 218PP £7.99 ISBN 9781839130458

Bea has had a lot to deal with since her parents broke up and her dad came out as gay. Her loving family and friends and a perceptive therapist have helped her through, and she now has a lot to look forward to as her family changes and expands. But will she be able to forgive herself for past mistakes? A captivating and moving novel which takes an honest look at the challenges and joys of family life and shines with love, hope and resilience. (Age 12–14)

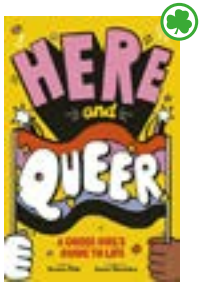


JUNO DAWSON

WHAT IS GENDER? HOW DOES IT DEFINE US? AND OTHER BIG QUESTIONS

WAYLAND 2019 (PBK) 48PP £9.99 ISBN 9781526300010

This is a guide to gender, sex, sexual fluidity, transgender issues, sexism, feminism and equality. The concepts are laid out clearly and accessibly, through a mix of definitions, examples and case studies. There are eight case studies from authors, artists and sportspeople, each presenting different experiences – of being gay, a woman, transgender, intersex – and serving to reference the definitions given elsewhere, while giving a human face and experience to the terms. Recommended for young people but also parents and guardians!
(Non-fiction, Age 12–14, Young Adult)



ROWAN ELLIS illustrated by JACKY SHERIDAN

HERE AND QUEER: A QUEER GIRL'S GUIDE TO LIFE

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2022 (PBK) 160PP £9.99 ISBN 978011264731

The start of the book explains terminology, the use of labels (and how this is for each individual to decide) and gender identification and concludes with several thinking points. These are various questions aimed at helping the reader to consider the information they have read, and to help them realise and articulate their feelings and beliefs. There is an excellent glossary of terms and phrases used throughout the book, as well as useful websites for further information. The text covers multiple aspects of being a queer girl in today's world and is full of illustrations, with an informal yet dynamic layout, and uses consistently positive language throughout. (Non-fiction, Age 12–14, Young Adult)

JUSTIN HANCOCK illustrated by FUCHSIA MacAREE

CAN WE TALK ABOUT CONSENT?

FRANCES LINCOLN CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 160PP £8.99 ISBN 9780711256545

Often highlighted as an issue missing from school curriculums, the topic of consent is tackled in this illustrated book, aimed at young people, in an easy-to-understand way, mixing humour and serious subject matter in short and witty digestible chunks. Offering a step-by-step guide on how to understand consent when making choices such as watching a movie or ordering pizza with friends, or when it comes to hugging, kissing and sex, it also teaches techniques for saying and understanding 'no' and how to relate to and understand other people's experiences. (Non-fiction, Age 12–14, Young Adult)

ADIBA JAIGIRDAR

THE HENNA WARS

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 400PP £7.99 ISBN 9781444962208

Nishat, a Muslim girl who just came out to her parents, has to figure out how to not crumble under the weight of their rejection and disapproval of her sexual identity. In the Catholic girls' secondary school in Dublin she attends, she also has to deal with racism and homophobia and a business competition in which her culture is appropriated. On top of all of that she is falling in love with her rival. This contemporary novel is set against a backdrop of love–hate rivalry, with a good dose of unfailing sisterly support. Winner of both the Judges' Special and the Junior Juries' Awards at the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2022. (Age 12–14, Young Adult)

MOLLY KNOX OSTERTAG

THE GIRL FROM THE SEA

SCHOLASTIC 2021 (PBK) 256PP £10.99 ISBN 9781338540574

A fresh graphic-novel take on the age-old magical mermaid/selkie story. When Morgan kisses the strange girl in the water who saves her from drowning, Keltie is able to join Morgan on land. As she comes to terms with her identity, first love, coming out and friendships all come into play. Clever use of illustrated group texts figure prominently, showing true-to-life teenage friend-group dynamics, and serve to highlight the collision of Morgan's two lives – the one her friends know and her new secret one.
(Age 12–14, Young Adult)

MAE MARTIN

CAN EVERYONE PLEASE CALM DOWN? A GUIDE TO 21ST CENTURY SEXUALITY

WREN & ROOK 2019 (PBK) 288PP £9.99 ISBN 9781526361653

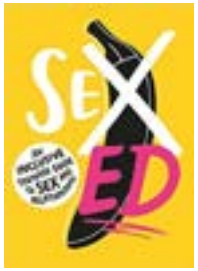
A thoughtful discussion of sexuality, gender, spectrums, the binary and nonbinary, fluidity and varying experiences of LGBTQ+ people, this insightful book explains a range of terms and shares ideas on how to tackle homophobia and transphobia and, indeed, support LGBTQ+ people for allies from within or outside the community. It offers reflections on LGBTQ+ history from past to present and much more. Mae Martin's tone is light and fun, with plenty of humour thrown in, discussing important issues for us all, as LGBTQ+ people and allies. (Non-fiction, Age 12–14, Young Adult)

RICHIE SADLIER

LET'S TALK: ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND INTIMACY

GILL BOOKS 2022 (HBK) 224PP €16.99 ISBN 9780717191901

Delving into topics such as sexuality, consent, sexual health and safety, and presenting them not just as issues that teenage boys will face but as things they need to be aware of as they may also impact their friends. The tone is conversational and frank, never shying away from the emotional, physical and legal consequences of impulsive behaviour. This is a book that is sorely needed, not just for teenage boys, but for their parents, guardians and teachers too. It neither condemns nor condones but seeks to offer as much information as possible to help make informed, healthy decisions.
(Non-fiction, 12–14, Young Adult)

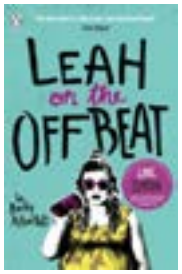


THE SCHOOL OF SEXUALITY EDUCATION

SEX ED: AN INCLUSIVE TEENAGE GUIDE TO SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

WALKER BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 256PP £9.99 ISBN 9781406399080

The School of Sexuality Education is a UK-based educational facilitation organisation. With chapters that explore discrimination, gender and sexuality, the physical body, consent, relationships, sexual and reproductive health, as well as digital literacy and body image, this truly inclusive guide is framed in accessible yet comprehensive language. The tone is both light and serious, and carefully respectful of its audience. Essential reading for anyone who wants to have open and honest conversations about the things that matter when it comes to relationships, connections and positive sexual experiences.
(Non-fiction, Age 12–14, Young Adult)

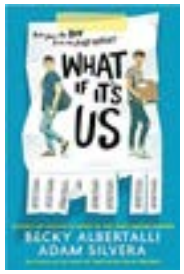


BECKY ALBERTALLI

LEAH ON THE OFFBEAT

PENGUIN BOOKS 2018 (PBK) 368PP £7.99 ISBN 9780241331057

This sequel to *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* is narrated by Simon's best friend, Leah, a bisexual girl who is very definite in her own sexual identity but not comfortable sharing it with others. Set a little over a year after Simon's story, the gang find themselves facing not only graduation, but also the potential for their group to splinter apart. Leah's voice is as breezy and effortless as Simon's while the conflicts and problems are a little darker this time, tackling not only romance and sexuality but also class and the worry of impending change. (Age Young Adult)



BECKY ALBERTALLI and ADAM SILVERA

WHAT IF IT'S US

SIMON & SCHUSTER 2018 (PBK) 344PP £7.99 ISBN 9781471176395

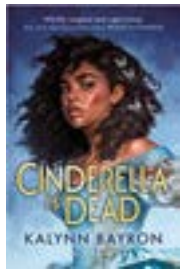
Arthur is in New York for an internship and is expecting a summer straight off Broadway. Ben is broken-hearted and angry at the universe. The two meet by chance in a post office but then they are separated again, without each other's contact details. Two bestselling and beloved YA authors combine their talents for this dual-perspective romance story. The cast is diverse in terms of race, beliefs and sexuality, and this is a book in which many teenagers will be able to see themselves. It is a joy to read a book showing (mostly) positive experiences for gay teens with their family and friend groups. Look out for the follow-up *Here's to Us*.
(Age Young Adult)

DEAN ATTA illustrated by ANSHIKA KHULLAR

THE BLACK FLAMINGO

HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2020 (PBK) 368PP £7.99 ISBN 9781444948608

Growing up, Michael has always felt like he is never enough: not black enough, not Cypriot enough, not masculine enough, not gay enough and not able to be true to himself enough. As he embarks on his first year in university, these feelings of not belonging anywhere intensify – that is, until he meets Mzz Behaviour. In Drag Society, Michael is finally free to explore who he really is and who he is becoming. (Age Young Adult)



KALYNN BAYRON

CINDERELLA IS DEAD

BLOOMSBURY YA 2020 (PBK) 400PP £7.99 ISBN 9781526621979

Sophia knows she must attend the King's Ball and secure a husband. She must be like Cinderella. Failing to do so could prove deadly. Yet, she yearns for the power of choice. She defiantly escapes and teams up with the fearless redhead Constance in a search for the truth behind Cinderella's twisted tale. In this feminist retelling, Bayron offers a dark but ultimately hopeful new spin on a classic. Read for an inclusive and compelling tale of resistance, deftly exploring oppression, unrealistic ideals and queerness. Her next title, *This Poision Heart*, is equally recommended. (Age Young Adult)

edited by SHAKIRAH BOURNE and DANA ALISON LEVY

ALLIES

DK 2021 (PBK) 240PP £12.99 ISBN 9780241505953

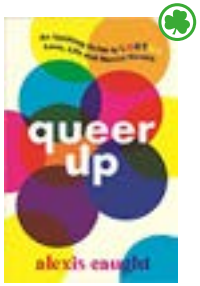
This collection of deeply personal essays from a wide variety of young adult authors drills down into the meaning of allyship and examines practical ways to bolster those who need our support. The essays encourage readers to question their own biases concerning race, abilities and sexuality, and to use their own power and platforms to amplify the voices of others or support them. Allies acknowledges that we live in an imperfect world, but it offers hope that we can create a more equitable one. (Age Young Adult)

TANYA BYRNE
AFTERLOVE
HODDER CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 400PP £7.99 ISBN 9781444955958

Ash Persaud has a brave, romantic, stupid heart. Unlucky in love, when she meets Poppy Morgan on a school trip, Ash thinks she could be the one to end all the false starts. Except starts don't get falser than dying at sixteen and waking up with a job to do. An intense blush of delighted first love, *Afterlove* sweeps Ash and readers up in the tide of the uncontrollable universe. But with love and family, there is always a reason to look to hopeful shores. (Age Young Adult)

KACEN CALLENDER
FELIX EVER AFTER
FABER & FABER 2021 (PBK) 368PP £7.99 ISBN 9780571368013

This is a truly honest story following Felix Love, a boy who feels like he never really fits in, being Black, queer and transgender alongside attending a prestigious school and coming from a working-class family. Between receiving transphobic messages, his father struggling to accept his transition and his mother fleeing, Felix is also confronted with the complexities of gender labels. Callender bravely questions definitions of gender while also challenging the reader to never assume about people's private lives. This story is raw, open and breathtakingly real. (Age Young Adult)



ALEXIS CAUGHT
QUEER UP: AN UPLIFTING GUIDE TO LGBTQ+ LOVE, LIFE AND MENTAL HEALTH
WALKER BOOKS 2022 (PBK) 256PP £7.99 ISBN 9781406399226

Positive, frank, empathetic, kind – this is a complete guide to the social, emotional and political complexities of learning to navigate life as an LGBTQ+ person with a strong emphasis on mental health and empowerment. For those that want to learn more or are seeking a little bit of friendly guidance, this is the book for you. The writer, who amongst other things is a podcaster, reaches out to others for any areas that are outside of his own experiences. The result is a book that is respectful, inclusive, helpful and useful – with really well-thought -out sections for allies. (Non-fiction, Age Young Adult)

DARREN CHARLTON
WRANGLESTONE
STRIPES PUBLISHING 2020 (PBK) 384PP £7.99 ISBN 9781788951210

An isolated community fights for survival against the odds in a post-apocalyptic America. In normal conditions the surrounding water provides safety, but now, in the harsh icy conditions their protection is gone. Then Peter breaks a rule and is banished. Together with Cooper the rancher, he must face survival and discovery. Heartwarming and horrifying by turns, this is the book you never knew you needed – a thrilling, epic, apocalyptic zombie tale with a really tender love story at its heart. (Age Young Adult)

CAT CLARKE
LETTING GO
BARRINGTON STOKE 2019 (PBK) 104PP £7.99 ISBN 9781781128381

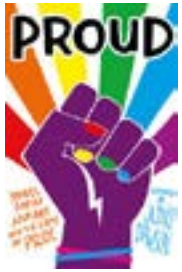
Agnes has been hiding from life since her world-ending break-up with Ellie, but because of a promise she made in the past, she has somehow ended up on top of a mountain with her ex and her ex's new boyfriend, Steve. Totally normal. Agnes is way out of her comfort zone, but when the weather turns and tensions rise, she finds her inner strength again. This uplifting quick read about loss, acceptance and finding yourself is particularly suitable for reluctant or dyslexic readers. (Age Young Adult)

ORLAGH COLLINS
ALL THE INVISIBLE THINGS
BLOOMSBURY YA 2019 (PBK) 368PP £7.99 ISBN 9781408888339

For four years Vetty Lake has been keeping her heart in hiding. Since her mum died and her family moved out of London it's felt so much safer not to tell people how she really feels. She's never even told anyone she's attracted to girls as well as boys. But now Vetty's seventeen and coming back to London, she's determined to start living out loud. A warm, witty, important story about being a young woman today, and what it's like to find a real connection amid all the noise. (Age Young Adult)

HELEN CORCORAN
QUEEN OF COIN AND WHISPERS
THE O'BRIEN PRESS 2020 (PBK) 447PP €12.99 ISBN 9781788491181

Lia always knew she would rule one day. She just had to hope that her uncle didn't completely ruin their country before he passed away. Xania, her new spymaster, needs to keep her queen alive during the political upheavals. These two girls, brought together by duty, must find a way to protect their growing friendship and love. Corcoran writes with a vividness that engages the reader while drawing out the intrigue in the story, allowing an intricate plot to unfold. (Age Young Adult)



compiled by JUNO DAWSON
PROUD
STRIPES PUBLISHING 2019 (PBK) 352PP £8.99 ISBN 9781788950602

Proud is a collection of stories, poetry and illustrations all on the theme of pride, compiled and curated by YA author Juno Dawson. It features both well-established LGBTQ+ authors and illustrators, as well as four new authors published for the first time. The stories and poems have a universal appeal as they deal with life, love, a sense of identity, of just wanting to be who you are and to live your life as yourself. The collection is fresh, funny and quite often touching. (Age Young Adult)

JUNO DAWSON illustrated by SOOFIYA

WHAT'S THE T? THE NO-NONSENSE GUIDE TO ALL THINGS TRANS AND/OR NON-BINARY FOR TEENS

WREN & ROOK 2021 (PBK) 304PP £8.99 ISBN 9781526362827

What's the T? is a guide written primarily for trans, nonbinary and questioning teens. There is also a section for parents and guardians. Juno Dawson's conversational style is accessible and engaging. She manages to cover a huge range of topics, including medical and legal advice, and how to access services. There is information on trans terminology, history and the gamut of hurdles and delights a transgender or nonbinary individual might face. This guide answers all the questions the reader might have, whatever their age or gender.
(Non-fiction, Age Young Adult)

JENNY DOWNHAM

UNBECOMING

DAVID FICKLING BOOKS 2016 (PBK) 448PP £7.99 ISBN 9781910989029

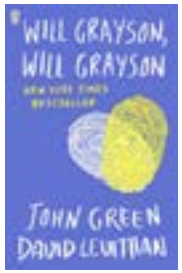
When Katie's estranged grandmother Mary turns up after years of absence, it is up to the seventeen-year-old to untangle the truths and lies that have affected three generations of women in her family, a task made more difficult by Mary's dementia. This is a story about bravery and living your life for yourself and serves as a reminder that we are all ultimately 'a work in progress'. Featuring a lesbian protagonist and an elderly woman whose spirit and story are unforgettable, this nuanced young adult novel is highly recommended! (Age Young Adult)

MOÏRA FOWLEY-DOYLE

ALL THE BAD APPLES

PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE 2019 (PBK) 352PP £7.99 ISBN 9780241333969

On Deena's seventeenth birthday, the day she finally comes out to her family, her wild and mysterious sister Mandy is seen leaping from a cliff. The family is heartbroken, but not surprised. The women of the Rys family have always been troubled – 'bad apples', their father calls them – and Mandy is the baddest of them all. But then Deena starts to receive the letters. Letters from Mandy, claiming that their family's blighted history is not just bad luck or bad decisions, but a curse, handed down to the Rys women through the generations. (Age Young Adult)

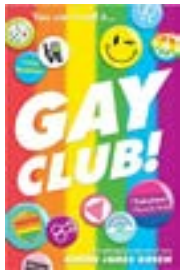


JOHN GREEN and DAVID LEVITHAN

WILL GRAYSON, WILL GRAYSON

PENGUIN BOOKS 2012 (PBK) 352PP £7.99 ISBN 9780141346113

One cold night, in a most unlikely corner of Chicago, Will Grayson crosses paths with ... Will Grayson. Two young men with the same name, running in two very different circles, suddenly find their lives going in new and unexpected directions, culminating in epic turns-of-heart and the most fabulous musical ever to grace the high-school stage. Told in alternating voices from two award-winning authors, John Green and David Levithan, this collaborative novel features a double helping of heart and humour. (Age Young Adult)



SIMON JAMES GREEN

GAY CLUB!

SCHOLASTIC 2022 (PBK) 374PP £8.99 ISBN 9780702313677

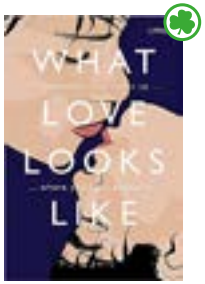
Ostensibly a gloriously back-stabbing, melodramatic school election/rom-com teen drama, this is in fact a clever and heartfelt comment on the continuing struggle of queer people in society and especially in schools. An election for president of the school 's LGBTQ+ society takes a turn for the dramatic when a rival enters the race. Filled with scandals, betrayals and missteps but with heartfelt solidarity ultimately winning through, this hilarious novel is one for the upper end of young adult. (Age Young Adult)

SIMON JAMES GREEN

NOAH CAN'T EVEN

SCHOLASTIC 2017 (PBK) 320PP £8.99 ISBN 9781407179940

Noah Grimes is an exceedingly awkward almost-sixteen-year-old who wants more than anything else to fit in. Problem is, his mum's Beyoncé tribute act doesn't help matters in school, his dad disappeared years ago and his beloved gran isn't herself any more. He only has one friend, Harry, who has been with him through thick and thin. Why can't he just be normal, like everyone else in school? Maybe if he struck up a relationship with lovely, kind, pretty Sophie, he'd be seen in a different light? But Noah's plans for romance are derailed when Harry kisses him at a party. The hilarity continues in *Noah Could Never*. (Age Young Adult)



JARLATH GREGORY

WHAT LOVE LOOKS LIKE

THE O'BRIEN PRESS 2021 (PBK) 240PP €9.99 ISBN 9781788491624

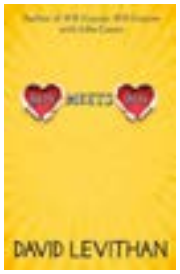
Meet Ben, seventeen, gay and looking for love. Refreshingly honest, yet sometimes naïve, Ben has everything mapped out – teacher training awaits, family life is good. His best friends, Chelsea and Soda, bring advice and life tips on the joys and perils of love in contemporary Dublin's LGBTQ+ community with their own compelling stories. Navigating bullying, anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment and the North/South view of 'coming out' in Ireland, Gregory gives a realistic and optimistic picture of life for Irish teenagers exploring their sexuality. (Age Young Adult)

MEG GREHAN

BABY TEETH

LITTLE ISLAND BOOKS 2021 (PBK) 192PP €10.00 ISBN 9781912417902

This is a unique and elegant take on the vampire romance trope, falling victim to none of the usual clichés. Written in a lyrical verse form that has the soothing quality of a lullaby one minute and lies like a lead weight on your heart the next, this is a story of tragedy, tenderness and compelling beauty. Claudia learns Immy's incredible secret, but being loved by a vampire was never going to be easy. The pair's need for each other drowns out all fear and doubt, at least for now. (Age Young Adult)



DAVID LEVITHAN

BOY MEETS BOY

HARPERCOLLINS CHILDREN'S BOOKS 2013 (PBK) 240PP £7.99 ISBN 9780007533039

This is the story of Paul, a student at a high school like no other: the cheerleaders ride Harleys, the homecoming queen used to be a guy named Daryl (she now prefers Infinite Darlene and is also the star quarterback), and the gay-straight alliance was formed to help the straight kids learn how to dance. When Paul meets Noah, he thinks he's found the one his heart is made for. Until he blows it. This is a happy, meaningful romantic comedy about finding love, losing love and doing what it takes to get love back in a crazy world. (Age Young Adult)

C.G. MOORE

FALL OUT

UCLAN PUBLISHING 2020 (PBK) 322PP £7.99 ISBN 9781912979189

Sixteen-year-old Cal Adams has just come out to his mother (it didn't go well) and now his dad has been served a barring order for punching him. He's mercilessly bullied at school, both physically and psychologically, and is not sure who his friends are among the sea of haters who blindly follow the 'popular' boy in tormenting him. Fast-paced chapters flow in Cal's distinctive voice, describing relatable teenage experiences, but there are darker, more disquieting moments too. This is a gritty, heartbreaking and inspiring read. (Age Young Adult)

C.G. MOORE illustrated by BECKY CHILCOTT

GUT FEELINGS

UCLAN PUBLISHING 2021 (PBK) 426PP £7.99 ISBN 9781912979431

Chris is eleven when he first learns that he has inherited a condition that predisposes him to cancer. This realistic and insightful verse narrative follows Chris through his teen years to university, as he experiences preventative surgeries, the resultant scarring and chronic illness, and his emotionally distant father's traumatic brain injury. The impact of illness on Chris's dating life as a young gay man is sensitively handled, as he grows to accept his body. Daily life with chronic illness is especially well depicted. Winner of the 2022 KPMG Children's Books Ireland Book of the Year Award. (Age Young Adult)

JANDY NELSON

I'LL GIVE YOU THE SUN

WALKER BOOKS 2015 (PBK) 432PP £7.99 ISBN 9781406326499

Unusually structured and poetically written, *I'll Give You the Sun* is a story of life, love, loss and art as twins Noah and Jude each give their perspective on the deterioration of their once close relationship over the course of three years. This is an incredibly visual, quirky and imaginative tale, and the characters of Jude and Noah are so real and relatable, it is impossible to avoid being drawn into their story. A heartbreaking and heartwarming tale. (Age Young Adult)

PATRICK NESS

MORE THAN THIS

WALKER BOOKS 2014 (PBK) 480PP £7.99 ISBN 9781406350487

Ness's stark and beautiful prose introduces us to Seth, a boy who doesn't know what will happen next, having woken up at his childhood home following a drowning at sea. Ness leavens the sometimes heavy existentialist text with some magic characterisation, especially in Tomasz, a hilariously sweet and earnest Polish boy. Thriller, sci-fi novel, coming-of-age story, *More Than This* is difficult to define, which only adds to its appeal. The perfect novel for any teenager (or adult) pondering the big questions of life. (Age Young Adult)

MEREDITH RUSSO

IF I WAS YOUR GIRL

USBORNE PUBLISHING 2016 (PBK) 304PP £7.99 ISBN 9781474923835

Amanda Hardy is the new girl at school. Like everyone else, all she wants is to make friends and fit in. But Amanda is holding back. Even from Grant, the guy she's falling in love with. Amanda has a secret. At her old school, she used to be called Andrew. And secrets always have a way of getting out ... This is a coming-of-age story about family, friendship and first love. A book about loving yourself and being loved for who you really are. (Age Young Adult, 16+)

ADAM SILVERA

HISTORY IS ALL YOU LEFT ME

SIMON & SCHUSTER 2017 (PBK) 304PP £7.99 ISBN 9781471146183

Griffin is grieving. He has just lost Theo in a tragic accident and he is devastated by sorrow. It's made worse because the sorrow is a complicated one – Theo was his best friend, but also his ex-boyfriend. Silvera shows relationships for what they are – intricate and confusing – and how love and friendship can intertwine, tangle and become impossible to undo. Ultimately, this is what the novel demonstrates: that grief is complex, but that the history someone leaves can also create a future for those left behind. (Age Young Adult)

CIARA SMYTH

NOT MY PROBLEM

ANDERSEN PRESS 2021 (PBK) 276PP £8.99 ISBN 9781839130854

This coming-of-age novel explores the struggles and relationships of Aideen, a savvy high school student with attitude (the interplay between herself and her teacher Miss Devlin is one of the books' most appealing features). A slapstick series of incidents with her fellow students hides the serious challenges and worries Aideen faces with her troubled mother and life in general. A contemporary look at friendship, the book is filled with all the heartache, hiccups and hilarity experienced by a young girl as she faces the world. Shortlisted for the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2022. (Age Young Adult)

CIARA SMYTH

THE FALLING IN LOVE MONTAGE

ANDERSEN PRESS 2020 (PBK) 400PP £7.99 ISBN 9781783449668

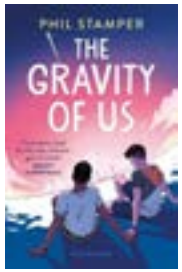
Saoirse has a lot going on. She has just finished the Leaving Cert, her mum doesn't live at home any more and she's on the outs with her best friend. But then she meets Ruby – fun, mischievous, fascinating Ruby. Saoirse feels she can leave all her problems behind if she just follows some rules for life. But can she keep Ruby from getting too close? Smyth deals with difficult issues deftly and realistically, with body-positive, self-assured young women working out their place in the world. Winner of the Junior Juries' Award at the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2021. (Age Young Adult)

PHIL STAMPER

AS FAR AS YOU'LL TAKE ME

BLOOMSBURY YA 2021 (PBK) 352PP £7.99 ISBN 9781526630728

Seventeen-year-old Marty travels to London with his oboe and a bit of savings. He's lied to his parents to make his escape from conservative small-town Kentucky. A coming-of-age story about a young man who is figuring out how to live life on his own terms, including exploring his sexuality, without judgement from others. Marty is a multifaceted character, balancing anxiety, shyness and a lack of confidence with loyalty, kindness and a passion for music. The author has written a book that is rich and complex but still light and a joy to read. (Age Young Adult)

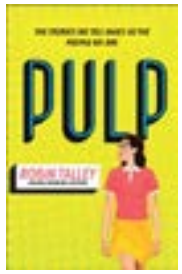


PHIL STAMPER

THE GRAVITY OF US

BLOOMSBURY YA 2020 (PBK) 352PP £7.99 ISBN 9781526619945

Popular live-streamer Cal moves from Brooklyn to Houston because his father is hired to be a pilot on a NASA mission to Mars. One problem: all of the astronauts and their families are filmed for a reality show and Cal is asked to adhere to a non-compete clause. There, he meets fellow astrokids Kat and Leon, who becomes Cal's boyfriend. A reminder that hubris can get the best of everyone, to never stop questioning the powers that be and that first love is all-consuming. (Age Young Adult)

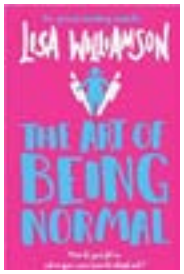


ROBIN TALLEY

PULP

HQ YOUNG ADULT 2018 (PBK) 416PP £7.99 ISBN 9781848457126

Explorations of metafiction, intertextuality and sexuality are deftly woven together in this rewarding, timely novel. Seventeen-year-old Abbey Zimit is out, proud and actively resisting Trump's America, although the pressures of adult life are beginning to creep up on her. Her senior project on classic lesbian pulp fiction is her chief source of solace, especially her growing obsession with the mysterious author Marian Love, whose writing provides the framework for Abbey's own foray into the genre. (Age Young Adult)



LISA WILLIAMSON

THE ART OF BEING NORMAL

DAVID FICKLING BOOKS 2020 (PBK) 384PP £7.99 ISBN 9781788451338

This incredible début from Lisa Williamson is witty, thought-provoking and sure to blow you away. Protagonists David and Leo devastate and inspire us with their compelling voices and authentic experiences – each chapter is a rollercoaster. This empowering exploration of the transgender experience is remarkable for its universality as much as its subject matter – exploring human nature and the desire to be one's true self in a sensitive and entirely natural way. A must read. (Age Young Adult)

LEWIS HANCOX

WELCOME TO ST. HELL: MY TRANS TEEN MISADVENTURE

SCHOLASTIC 2022 (PBK) 304PP £10.99 ISBN 9780702313905

This is a, candid and frank graphic memoir about the author's life as a trans boy growing up uncomfortable in his body, and slowly discovering who he is. It cleverly shows us both parts of his story – a powerful, brutally honest depiction of his experience of growing up and the intensity of negotiating high school while dealing with gender dysphoria, at a time before transitioning was well understood, while remaining sympathetic towards parents who didn't understand but whose love shines through. With adult themes, this is strongly advised for older readers. (Age Young Adult, 16+)

LUCAS ROCHA illustrated by MARINA ESMERALDO
translated by LARISSA HELENA

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

DAVID FICKLING BOOKS 2022 (PBK) 288PP £14.99 ISBN 9781788451925

Lucas Rocha's LGBTQ+ novel depicts the lives of three men struggling with their connection to HIV. Ian is newly diagnosed and hiding it from family and friends. Henrique has only bad experiences after telling a romantic partner. Victor doesn't feel he can be in a relationship with someone that has HIV. The frustrations of young adulthood and misunderstandings allow for Rocha's novel to take the reader on a painful, humorous and, most importantly, realistic journey to acceptance. (Age Young Adult, 16+)

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